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Letter dated 16 January 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the following statement calling on Lebanon to reverse the decision to carry out three executions on Saturday 17 January and to maintain Lebanon's moratorium on the death penalty, issued on 16 January 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland
to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 16 January 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement calling on Lebanon to reverse the decision to carry out three executions on Saturday 17 January and to maintain Lebanon's moratorium on the death penalty, issued on 16 January 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union has learned with dismay that despite its previous expressions of concern to the Lebanese authorities, the decision has been taken to carry out, on Saturday 17 January 2004, three executions. In doing so, Lebanon would suspend the moratorium on the death penalty which it established in 1998.

The European Union is adamantly opposed to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances and as a priority seeks its universal abolition. The Union considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. The Union finds this form of punishment cruel and inhuman. The death penalty provides no added value in terms of deterrence and any miscarriage of justice would be irreversible. Consequently, the death penalty has been long abolished in all European Union countries. But the reasons for doing away with this form of penalty apply to every person in any part of the world. Universal abolition of the death penalty is thus a strongly held policy view agreed by all members of the European Union.

The European Union notes that Lebanon has hitherto maintained a long standing moratorium on the use of the death penalty. The Union has, in the past, conveyed to the Lebanese authorities its support for the continuation of this moratorium and its belief that the Lebanese authorities should build on the moratorium and move towards the abolition of the death penalty.

The European Union calls on President Lahoud to use the authority granted to him to reverse this decision, and thus to uphold the current moratorium, and calls on the Lebanese Government to resume its long standing moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with the present statement.